

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-6, and 8-16 are pending in the patent application. The Examiner has rejected Claims 1, 4, 6, 10, and 14-16 under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Mora in view of Burgess; Claims 3, 5 and 13 as unpatentable over Mora in view of Burgess and further in view of Bates; Claim 9 as unpatentable over Mora in view of Burgess and Reed; and, Claims 8, and 11-12 as unpatentable over Mora in view of Burgess and further in view of Salas. For the reasons set forth below, Applicant respectfully contends that the claims as amended are patentable over the cited art..

The present application teaches and claims a system and apparatus for automatically determining, updating, and indicating user access status for each of a plurality of users of collaborative groupware software, the user access status indicating whether the user has accessed each document and being viewable by all of the users of the groupware. The invention includes means and steps for tracking user access status and displaying the user access status in a status row bar in a view window at the display of each user of each document of the groupware. All users of the groupware can check the user status for all other

users of each of the documents accessible via the collaborative groupware software.

In the **Response to Arguments** section of the Final Office Action, the Examiner has indicated that "the broad diction of the claims fail to describe or teach user status [for each of a plurality of users of each of at least one document accessible with groupware] as applicant is arguing" and that "Applicant is advised to further define the terms [of groupware] in claims to reduce broad interpretations." By this Amendment, Applicant has amended the language of the independent claims. Applicant believes that the claims as amended are patentable over the cited art.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner cited a new primary reference, the Mora patent. The Mora patent is directed to a computer-aided project notebook which stores documents. The Mora notebook allows the user to select a status category for each document, such as "in work" or "pending approval" (Col. 1, lines 57-60, Fig. 6, and Col. 7, lines 22-23). The user can also input a version number for the document as well as the date. The Mora system will then show the user-selected document status for the single document.

Applicant respectfully contends that the Mora patent does not teach or suggest the invention as claimed, alone or in combination with the additionally cited patents. The Mora patent does not teach or suggest user access status, let alone user access status for each user of each document accessible using collaborative groupware software. Rather, Mora simply provides document status categories for user selection. For any one document, the user selects a document status category, which is not user-specific and does not necessarily change even if updates are made (i.e., the "in work" category applies to version 1 as well as to version 35). Further, the Mora system does not automatically update document status, but requires a user to input a selection from a list of status categories.

The Burgess patent is directed to a system and method for a single user to check whether or not he has read a file. Burgess provides a user bitmap which comprises a snapshot of each file with a bitmap code (i.e., a file status indicator) which tells the user whether or not he has read a file. The Burgess user can only view file status for his own files.

Applicant respectfully asserts that, even if one having skill in the art were motivated to combine the teachings of the Mora and Burgess patents, one would not arrive at the invention as claimed. Since Burgess provides a user bitmap accessible only by the user for files stored at the user's own computer system, addition of a Mora user selection feature to allow the user to select a document status category would not yield a system and method as claimed. Rather, the combined system would provide for display to a single user of both the single user "read" status of the document and the user-selected document status category for the document. There is nothing in either the Mora patent or the Burgess patent which teaches or suggests that multiple users be allowed to view a single user's read status for stored documents. Further, there is no teaching or suggestion in either patent of a system automatically tracking, updating, and displaying user access status for each user of each of a plurality of groupware documents and providing that information for viewing by a plurality of users. Accordingly, Applicant concludes that the combination of references does not obviate the invention as recited in independent Claims 1, 6, and 10 and those claimed which depend therefrom.

The Examiner has additionally cited the Bates, Reed, and Salas patents in rejecting the language of the remaining claims which depend from Claims 1, 6 and 10. Applicant first notes that none of the cited references teaches or suggests those claim features which are missing from the Mora and Burgess patents. The Bates patent is cited for displaying information using colors or patterns. The Reed patent is cited for having a mail generation component. The Salas patent is cited for its teachings regarding indicating in an item box that an item of software available for testing/demonstration is a new version. None of Bates, Reed, and Salas, the cited teachings of which are further discussed below, teach or suggest the automatic tracking, updating, and displaying of user access status indications for each user of each document accessible via collaborative groupware.

With regard to Claim 3 and newly presented Claim 13, which recites that the users are divided into groups and the status indication shows what percentage of the users of each group have read each document, Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's rejections based on a combination of Mora, Burgess as modified by Bates. With regard to percentages, the Examiner has cited the teachings from Bates at Col. 12,

lines 63-64 which provide a "pointer to retrieve progress display element or a percent complete variable". Those teachings do not relate to a percentage of users of a group who have read a document. Rather, the Bates passages refers to what percentage of a screen or image to be displayed has been successfully uploaded and displayed thus far. Applicant refers the Examiner's attention, for example, to a screen shot of the USPTO.gov website during loading, wherein the user computer's browser will display, in the lower left corner a message such as "Downloading...83% complete". None of the cited passages teaches or suggests percentages of users from different groups using collaborative groupware software who have actually accessed a document.

With regard to Claim 5, while the Bates patent may show the use of colors or patterns for displaying linked nodes, the addition of Bates to a combination of Mora and Burgess would not obviate the claim language, since none of the references teach or suggest steps and means for automatically creating, updating and displaying a status indication indicating actual user status for each user regarding accessing each document for display to all users of groupware.

Claims 8, 11 and 12 have been rejected as unpatentable over Mora in view of Burgess and further in view of Salas. However, on page 6 of the Final Office Action, the Examiner has stated "Claims 6 and 12 are rejected under the same rationale given above. In the rejections set forth (*sic*), the examiner will address the additional limitations and point to the relevant teachings of Tada et al and Burgess, Mora and Salas." Applicant requests clarification of the grounds for rejecting the claims, since the Examiner had previously rejected Claim 6 based on Mora and Burgess (page 2), has previously rejected Claim 12 based on Mora and Burgess and Salas (page 2), and had not cited the Tada patent in any of the latest rejections.

With specific reference to Claim 8 and to newly added Claims 11 and 12, which recite, automatically changing the user access status indication when a user updates a document (Claim 11), and automatically updating the statuses of the other of said plurality of users are set to "not read" in said status database (Claims 8 and 12), Applicant asserts that the cited patents do not provide any teachings or suggestions of the claim language. Neither Mora nor Burgess automatically maintains user status for each user of each document accessible via groupware. Burgess only maintains

bitmaps for a single user. Mora only allows a user to select a document status category from a list for each single document. Neither patent teaches user access status for each user of each document, viewable by multiple users of groupware. Further neither patent teaches that the user status of multiple users be updated based on alteration of a groupware document by a single user.

The Examiner has acknowledged that the Mora and Burgess patent do not explicitly disclose user status indicating "not read" when a user has changed a document and has newly cited the Salas patent. Salas is directed to tracking user access to shareware, which is available to users for testing and/or demonstration. Salas teaches, in the cited passage from Col. 5, lines 43-49, that an item box will include an item's version, indicating whether an item has been changed. There is nothing in the Salas teachings that states or suggests that the Salas system automatically tracks, updates, and displays/notifies users of changes. Nor is there any teaching or suggestion in Salas that user access status is maintained for each of a plurality of individual users. Rather, when shareware is posted for access by users, it is posted with an item box that indicates its version, etc. as input by the individual who updated and

posted the shareware. Newly posted shareware is necessarily "not read" by any user. Its item box shows document status, "not read by any user", since it is new. It does not indicate individual user access status with respect to the new version. With regard to the cited passage from Col. 12, lines 31-37, Salas teaches that a user may interact with or modify the shareware. Salas does not teach, however, that information in the item box is altered when a user interacts with or modifies the shareware.

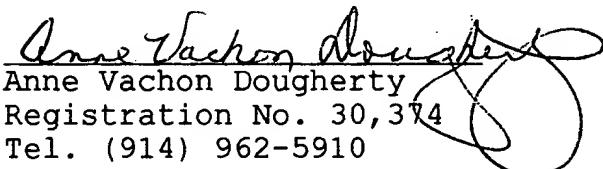
Finally, with regard to Claim 9, which additionally recites sending mail to users who have not read a document, it is clear that one having skill in the art would not look to modify Mora, or Mora and Burgess, with the Reed mail teachings. Since Mora does not track groups or track users of groups, Mora could not provide a mailing list of users from groups who had authorization to read a document but who had not read it. Burgess only tracks the single user's reading of local documents. Burgess would not logically be modified to have the single user e-mail himself to remind himself to read an un-read document. There are simply no teachings in the cited patents which would lead one to modify the cited patents in such a way as to arrive at the invention as claimed.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests entry of the amendments, reconsideration of the amended claim language in light of the remarks, withdrawal of the rejections, and allowance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,

N. Takishita

By:


Anne Vachon Dougherty
Registration No. 30,374
Tel. (914) 962-5910